

"in weakness and fear and much trembling." When he considers the obstacles in the way of his success; when he stands face to face with the dense ignorance, utter indifference, and spiritual bondage of those upon whom he would operate, it seems to me that the promise which will best sustain his sinking heart is, "When the Spirit is come he will convince the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment;" and when he is most oppressed with a sense of his own weakness, the thought which will likely most re-animate him is that our Great Intercessor has assured us, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that He may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth, for He dwelleth with you and shall be in you." Missionaries, then, without the unction of the Spirit, no matter what their genius, piety and devotion, are but a feeble instrumentality. Even the Apostles, though they enjoyed three years' intercourse with the Blessed Saviour, were unqualified for their work of propagating the gospel throughout the world, until they had received the fulfilment of the promise of the Father. Though the world was perishing while they waited; though they themselves had been ordained and commissioned, yet they must tarry at Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high. As has been well observed, "That long pause of the commissioned Church, in sight of a perishing world, is the Lord's most memorable and affecting protest beforehand, that no training, that no ordination, could qualify men to propagate the gospel without the baptism of the Holy Ghost."

Nay, so indispensably necessary is this baptism that our Lord Himself, Divine though he was as well as human, must be filled with the Spirit to fully qualify Him for His great work. We read that at the very threshold of His public ministry "He came in the power of the Spirit into Galilee," and it is an impressive fact, that the first prophecy that He applied to Himself as He stood in the synagogue at Nazareth, was the prediction of Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor."

And now, brethren, whether we consider the Spirit as the great subject of promise for the present dispensation, or think of the tremendous obstacles in the way of the complete triumph of the gospel, or reflect upon the feebleness of the instrumentality apart from His Almighty agency, the Spirit's presence, power and grace must be held to be the Church's hope in the prosecution of missions. This is the one only source of all spiritual power. To spread the gospel at home, to diffuse it in foreign lands, we must have our agents filled with the Spirit of God. As an eloquent writer has put it, "We want in this age, above all wants, fire, God's holy fire, burning in the breasts of men, stirring their brains, impelling their emotions, thrilling in their tongues, glowing in their countenances, vibrating in their actions, and expanding their intellectual powers more than can ever be done by the heats of genius, of argument, or of party; and fusing all their knowledge, logic and rhetoric into a burning stream." With emphasis, then, we reiterate that the Omnipotent agency of the Holy Spirit is the only source of spiritual power. If we wish to see careless sinners transformed into lovely saints; if we long to have all the members of all our churches active workers for Christ; if we desire that our ministers and missionaries should preach the gospel with clearness, tenderness, unction and power; if, in a word, we expect that the world will ever be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the channel of the sea, we must not only use the formula, but grasp its full significance, "I believe in the Holy Ghost." Let the Church exercise unfaltering confidence in the truth of the promise of the Father; let her hope everywhere centre, not in the efficacy of truth, order, influence, wealth, men, genius, talent, education, or civilization, but in the manifested presence, Almighty energy and infinite grace of the Holy Spirit, and with greater rapidity than ever before she will find that God's way will be made "known in the earth, and his saving health among all nations." May God hasten it in His time.